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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WILLITON.
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR
THE YEAR 1959.



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

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BURNELL'S GARAGE,Wootton Courtenay - Refuse Collection
(By Contract).

WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR
1959.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my annual report upon the health and sanitation of your district for the year 1959.

The general health of the district has been satisfactory. There were very few cases of infectious disease notified apart from a fairly considerable epidemic of measles during the earlier part of the year, this being a continuation of the previous year's epidemic.

Five cases of Poliomyelitis occurred, four with some degree of paralysis and one non-paralytic.

Scarlet fever accounted for 21 cases and whooping cough, 9.

Apart from this there was little in the way of infectious disease notified.

The work of the department has shown once again an increase, particularly with regard to the caravan problem and meat inspection.

Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station works continue to demand the attention of the department's Officers. The caravan site at Stogursey, occupied by workers at this plant, was nearing completion by the end of the year.

Meat inspection duties have increased with more slaughtering consequent upon the export of dressed carcasses and offal to the London market. A large proportion of the meat prepared in the district also finds its way to surrounding areas including Minehead and Weston-Super-Mare.

A further 39 dwellings have been modernised with the aid of improvement grants, the Local Authority making available some £9,697. The total cost of the schemes amounted to approximately £30,000. The public response to the "Standard Grant" scheme has not as yet been very considerable, due largely to the fact that the majority of rural-type properties require more extensive works than the provisions of the standard scheme.

The following sections detail the work of the department during the year, together with vital statistics and the general public health services.

<u>Section A.</u>	Vital Statistics and Social Conditions.
<u>Section B.</u>	Water Supplies, Sewage and Refuse Disposal.
<u>Section C.</u>	Housing.
<u>Section D.</u>	Food Inspection and Supplies.
<u>Section E.</u>	Public Health Nuisance, Complaints, etc.
<u>Section F.</u>	Caravans and Camping.
<u>Section G.</u>	Other Acts administered by the Department.
<u>Section H.</u>	Summary of Inspections and Visits by the Health Department Officers.

Section A.

Vital Statistics & Social Conditions.

The district in general is agricultural in character and being on the seaboard is attractive to the tourist. The A 39 highway carries a large volume of holiday traffic westwards and there is during holiday periods an appreciably large population in transit in addition to the considerable local holiday population, giving rise to much camping on unlicensed sites, road verges, lay-bys, etc, with all its attendant problems of litter, sanitation, etc. There has been little industrial development other than the Nuclear Power Station at Hinkley Point.

Residential development has taken place throughout the district in or near centres of population, the greater tendency to development being in the Eastern areas, i.e., Williton and Stogursey.

Area	97,364 acres.
Population (estimated mid-year home population)	12,600
Number of Dwelling Houses	4,467
Rateable Value	£124,551
Product of a Penny Rate	£490

Live Births.

	M.	F.	Total.
Legitimate	83	79	162
Illegitimate	1	8	9
	<u>84</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>171</u>

Birth rate per thousand population (live births) = 13.57

Still Births.

	M.	F.	Total.
Legitimate	2	-	2
Illegitimate	nil	nil	nil
	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>

Deaths.

From all causes	<u>84</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>205</u>
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Death Rate per thousand population = 16.27

Health Services.

The district is served by Hospitals at Minehead and Musgrove Park, Taunton, and Hospitals for the aged sick at Williton, Bridgwater and Taunton. Ambulance services are available from Minehead and Musgrove Park.

<u>Notifiable Diseases.</u>	<u>Cases Notified.</u>
Smallpox	Nil
Scarlet Fever	21
Diphtheria	Nil
Enteric Fever	"
Measles	144
Whooping Cough	9
Puerperal Pyrexia	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	Nil
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	"
Dysentery	"
Malaria	"
Acute Poliomyelitis	5
Encephalitis Lethargica	Nil
Erysipelas	"
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	1
" (Non-respiratory)	Nil
Pneumonia	5
Food Poisoning	Nil

Section B.

Water Supplies, Sewage & Refuse Disposal.

Water Supplies.

Water for the district as a whole has proved adequate in quantity but quality varies to a considerable extent. The majority of supplies, being unchlorinated, show varying bacteriological counts and although this contamination may not be seriously affecting public health it does indicate the possibility of serious pollution and is a potential danger.

Porlock supplies show an insufficiency in the late summer, due partly to increase in demand because of seasonal population increase and reduction in flow from springs, and the corrosion of certain inlet pipes into the system.

Twenty-three samples of water were taken for chemical analysis, all results proving satisfactory.

A total of 369 samples were taken for bacteriological analysis from all supplies, including public mains and private systems. Of the results obtained from those taken from unchlorinated supplies, 35.6% proved unsatisfactory in varying degrees. Similarly, 9% of those taken from chlorinated supplies showed minor amounts of contamination.

Precautionary measures were taken wherever contamination was proved, and involved chlorination of supplies and thorough overhauling of supply sources and collecting systems. Often it has been found that farm stock or deer have gained access to collecting areas. In one or two instances, flooding by stormwater has been the cause of gross contamination.

Three wells have been closed and alternative supplies substituted. The trunk main from Clatworthy Reservoir to Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station, together with ancillary reservoir and other works, has been the principal concern of the Engineer and Surveyor's department during the year. Branch services and other mains have been completed and satisfactory bacteriological tests obtained.

Refuse Disposal.

All parishes other than Oare receive a refuse collection service for the most part on a four-weekly basis. The more populated areas receive a fortnightly service and special arrangements are made for additional collections during the summer months for those areas most favoured by visitors and tourists. This collection service is carried out by a contractor.

Disposal is on four semi-controlled tips which are for the present proving adequate, but it is noticeable that tipping space fills up far quicker than in the past, indicative of the additional amount of refuse now being collected.

The infrequent nature of collection in the district continues to give rise to considerable complaint both by householders and tradespeople.

The litter problem is dealt with in as practicable a manner as possible. With the assistance and co-operation of the National Trust, Parish Councils, etc, litter baskets have been fixed throughout the district at beauty spots, and in lay-bys, etc. These are cleared by the refuse contractor, the National Trust in some instances and by an employee of the department.

Section C.

Housing.

Houses erected, or gained from conversion schemes within the district during the year, totalled 48. With houses closed or demolished totalling 4, there are now a total number of 4,467 permanent dwellings within the district, of which the local authority own 725.

The Housing Improvement Grant scheme is proving very successful. During the year 39 schemes were approved, 33 schemes were completed at a total cost of £24,354, and the amount of grant paid out by the local authority totalled £9,697.

The average cost of dwelling improvement has increased over the past three years as is indicated by the following figures -

Average cost of (Dwelling Improvement(1957-£818. 1958-£865. 1959-£738.

The type of property proposed as suitable for improvement with the aid of the grant has varied in age, character and locality to a great extent. The age of properties has similarly varied from the mid-sixteenth century to the early twentieth century.

There has been only one application for a Certificate of Disrepair, and no Certificates have been issued.

I would like to bring to the notice of higher authority the desirability of including in the definition of unfitness of a dwelling those features which are the cause of many accidents in the home. In particular I would mention staircases which are often steep and winding although in good repair, and are a serious danger to both the aged and to young children.

Section D.

Food Inspection & Supplies.

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	637	17	80	4632	3744	Nil
Number inspected	607	15	73	4211	3404	"
<u>All diseases ex- cept T.B.and Cysticerci.</u> Whole carcasses condemned.	2	5	2	17	3	"
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	34	6	Nil	17	50	
Percentage of the number inspected affected with diseases other than T.B.and Cysticerci.	5.9%	73.3%	2.7%	.43%	1.5%	"
T.B.only-whole carcasses condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	"
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	"
Percentage of carcasses affected	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1.6%	
<u>Cysticercosis</u> Carcasses affected	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	-	
<u>Weight of meat condemned (in lbs.)</u>						
(a) Tuberculosis	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1058	-
(b) Cysticercosis	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	-
(c) Other	1980	2885	115	986	801	
Total (lbs)	1980	2885	115	986	1859	

Slaughterhouses in the Central and Eastern areas of the district are dealing with appreciably more meat, particularly in the latter where killing is now in progress six days a week for the London and Weston-Super-Mare markets.

Tuberculosis in cattle has practically disappeared.

The standard of slaughterhouse premises has improved at Stogursey, complete modernisation having been carried out.

Efforts to bring slaughterhouses up to the standard necessary to comply with the new regulations continues to receive attention.

A meeting with representatives of the Watchet U.D.C., Minehead U.D.C and butchers, on July 29th, 1959.

The butchers in the Williton R.D., with existing slaughterhouses expressed a desire to retain them, and the two already slaughtering outside the area expect to be able to continue.



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Food Premises & Food Hygiene.

The standard of food hygiene continues to be good, informal action only being necessary against a small number of caterers in the area. One Hotel premises has been entirely renovated following complaints by the department. Cockroach infestation of food preparation premises has in several instances been dealt with by the department.

Section E.

Public Health Nuisances, Complaints, Etc.

Appropriate action has been taken regarding complaints arising from the discharge of cesspit emptiers, contractors now being allowed to discharge into public sewers flowing out to sea.

Rodent Control.

The Council's operative has been fully employed throughout the year, treatments and inspections carried out are as follows :-

<u>Property.</u>	<u>Inspected.</u>	<u>Treated.</u>
Domestic	659	298
Agricultural	224	28
Business	51	4
Local Authority	11	8
Total -		<u>945</u>
		<u>338</u>

Ministry requirements have been met regarding sewer inspections and treatment, and block control schemes operated where necessary.

Section F.

Caravans & Camping.

The 1959 holiday season brought, as usual, many caravans into the district and at the peak of the season most sites had more than could be comfortably accommodated.

Work upon modernising the Burgage Caravan site at Stogursey is in hand, and it is hoped to have W.C's connected to main drainage and electricity available, shortly.

Section G.

Factories Act, 1937.

There are 57 factories in the district, including 6 licenced slaughterhouses, which now fall within this category. The majority of the others are mainly of the light engineering type. The largest enterprise is of course the Nuclear Power Station previously referred to.

Two complaints regarding unsatisfactory sanitary accommodation have been dealt with.

There are 19 outworkers residing within the district and of these two only are employed by businesses outside the district.

Pet Animals Act.

Rag Flock Act.

There are no pet shops within the district or premises dealing in rag flock.

Section H.

Housing Acts, 1936-1954.

Rent Act, 1957.

Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1958.

Housing Inspections	513
Informal Notices served	3
Statutory " "	7

Public Health Acts.

Inspections of Drainage & Sewerage	125
" " Water Supplies	50
" " Refuse Disposal	69
" " Camping & Caravan Sites	122
" " Nuisances	43
" " Filthy or Verminous Premises	9
" " Public Conveniences	11
" " Sanitary Fittings	8
Miscellaneous Inspections	18
Infectious Diseases Enquiries	6

Diseases of Animals (Waste Foods) Order.

Inspections	4
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Food & Drugs Acts.

Inspections of Slaughterhouses	45
" " Food & Catering Premises	49
" " Knackers Yards	2
Informal Notices served	3

Factories Acts.

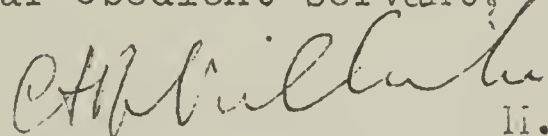
Inspections	8
Complaints Received	71
" Investigated	71

The work of the department in the immediate future will, in addition to normal routine, be largely concerned with the implementing of the requirements of the Slaughterhouses Act, 1958, and the preparation of the report required under the Slaughterhouse Reports (Appointed Day) Order, 1959.

Once again my thanks are due to the staff of the Public Health Department for their continued good work.

I am, Mr. Chairman & Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,



H.B., Ch.B.

Medical Officer of Health.

